

Amendment A  
Inventor(s) Name: Alan Smithies  
Attorney Docket No.: 15880-10003

### REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated May 9, 2003 as well as Examiner Lawrence's telephone conference with Sarah Vaz on August 28, 2003, the applicant enters the above amendments to the claims and specification.

The election of Group I, claims 1 through 18, provisionally elected by Mr. Kyle Elliot on May 1, 2003, is hereby affirmed.

The specification has been amended to add the application number of a co-pending application.

Please cancel claim 2.

Please amend claims 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15 as shown above.

Claims 1 through 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by EP 0726348 A1. As per the August 28, 2003 telephone conference, independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended to read in part "...a stiffening agent consisting of a polyimide..." and independent claim 15 has been amended to read in part "...a stiffening agent consisting of a polyamideimide..." The remaining claims are dependent on these amended independent claims. No new matter was added by this amendment, the amendment being fully supported by the specification.

As was discussed, the EP patent includes treating the substrate with a composition comprising a fluoropolymer and a rigidizing film forming material. As the stiffening agent of the present application consists of a polyimide, it cannot include a

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fluoropolymer. For this reason EP 0726348 A1 does not anticipate the present invention and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,070,519 to Lefkowitz et al. The '519 patent discloses and claims the use of a two layer substrate including glass fibers and mineral fibers. As discussed with the Examiner, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a polymer substrate. No new matter has been added by this amendment, the amendment being fully supported by the specification. As claims 3, 7 and 8 are dependent on claim 1, they are in condition for allowance without further amendment. It is therefore respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 6 has been amended to correct a typographical error in the spelling of polyamideimide, and as a matter of form. No new matter is added by these amendments that are fully supported by the specification.

Applicants' request for a one month extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) as well as Applicants' petition fee are enclosed herewith and filed simultaneously with this response.

If any issue regarding the allowability of any of the pending claims in the present application could be readily resolved, or if other action could be taken to further advance this application such as an Examiner's amendment, or if the Examiner should have any

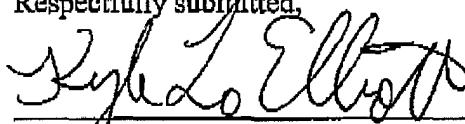
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questions regarding the present amendment, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner  
please telephone Applicant's undersigned attorney in this regard.

Date:

8-29-03

Respectfully submitted,



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